

FRIDAY, APRIL 24, 1992

SYRACUSE HERALD-JOURNAL

# Metro

SUBURBAN

B1

Jeff Light, City Editor  
470-2265

## Former morgue worker charged

► His lawyer wants bail lowered, says he's no threat.

By Shawn Carey  
Staff Writer

A suspended Onondaga County Medical Examiner's Office worker, who neighbors said invited people to his house to see human remains, faces sex charges involving teenage boys.

Auditors say evidence against Joseph J. Contrera, 37, of 424 Lockwood Road, Auburn, includes statements from the victims, a signed confession from Contrera, an audiotape and a videotape of Contrera performing sexual acts with one of the victims.

Contrera worked for the medical examiner's office as a morgue technician, but has been suspended from his job. He faces 24 charges.

Contrera's lawyers asked Cayuga County Court Judge Peter B. Corning to cut his bail from \$50,000 to \$5,000 Thursday. Corning reserved his decision.

A variety of human and animal bones were placed in his yard when the medical examiner's office held a 1988 seminar on the discovery of human remains, Dennis Sedor, one of his lawyers, said in court Thursday.

The four-day seminar was attended by various law enforcement agencies, and field classes were held at Contrera's residence, as well as at the residence of Onondaga County Medical Examiner Erik Mitchell, Sedor said.

The human remains, which were from corpses donated to the coroner's office, were left on Contrera's property for several months but eventually removed, Sedor said.

Sedor said the press is "attempting to portray Contrera as another 'Hannibal the Cannibal' or Jeffrey Dahmer, and I think it's vicious."

State Police Investigator David Gould said he is investigating reports from youths who said Contrera kept human bones in his back yard several months ago.

Neighbors on Lockwood Road had similar reports about Contrera, Laura Gillis of 427 Lockwood Road said Contrera had asked her

■ MORGUE, Page B3

## United Way won't pay its national dues

► Local officials are concerned about the misuse of money.

By Charles Jackson  
Staff Writer

The United Way of Central New York voted today to withhold \$72,000 in dues from its national affiliate, The United Way of America in Alexandria, Va.

The 25-member board of directors voted 16 to 9 to withhold the dues, said Harry Honan, president of the local United Way on South Salina Street.

The decision comes after William Aramony, former president of the national affiliate, was forced to resign after mismanaging funds. Honan said there is an investigation into Aramony's charging of personal travel expenses to United Way.

"He claims he reimbursed the money, but there will be several months before we can find out the outcome of the investigation," Honan said.

The local group was required by the national affiliate to give .08 percent of the \$8,011,426 raised within Onondaga County last year. The local United Way will withhold the dues until a business plan is presented defining how the national group will reorganize, said Jack Koerner, Central New York board chairman.

Koerner wants the national board of governors to have strong representation from local United Ways.

### DIVIDENDS

Niagara Mohawk's board of directors have approved an increase in the utility's quarterly common stock dividend from 16 cents to 20 cents per share.

Business/B6

### A MUSICAL LIFE

Peg Campbell grew up in a house filled with music.

Obituaries/B4



### TOP GROUPS

Westhill High School's chorus and concert band won awards recently at a music festival in Williamsburg, Va.

Class Action/B3

### NO CHARGE

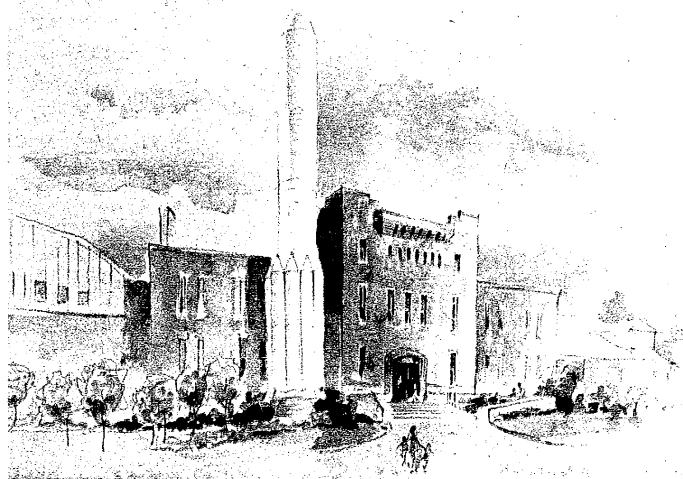
Onondaga County will keep paying for the sheriff's department helicopter to transport injured people.

Metro/B3

### IN SHAPE

Bodybuilding takes years of training, determination, consistency and discipline. For some teens, it's a way of life. They follow a strict regimen of diet and work to get in shape for competition.

## Science blasts off with Armory sale



THIS IS AN ARTIST'S rendering of what Syracuse's downtown Armory will look like after most renovations are completed in

1993. The property was transferred today, one of the first steps needed to begin work. A rocket is to sit outside the building.

► Discovery Center will move in within six months.

By Gary Grew  
Staff Writer

Syracuse's Discovery Center took its own giant leap today. There was an official change in ownership for the nearby Jefferson Street Armory that will become home to the center within six months.

The 116-year-old armory was sold by the state for \$1 to the Metropolitan Development Foundation, an arm of the local business community's Metropolitan Development Association.

The foundation will lease the 132,000 square-foot building to the Discovery Center's new Museum of Science & Technology.

The sale and today's transfer of the deed marked the conclusion of a year's worth of negotiations to move the U.S. Army's 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry to new \$5.4 million quarters being built at Molloy and Thompson roads.

It's the latest plan for Armory Square, an area next to downtown Syracuse. Trendy shops and restaurants have been popping up there for several years. Developer Robert Drouette has proposed a \$7 million retail and condominium project called Center Armory, the Common Council is scheduled to vote on his plan on Monday.

Another businessman, James Woods, proposed as an alternative renovation of the empty Dome Hotel and other underused buildings nearby.

A renovated Discovery Center is meant to be a major attraction.

The National Guard unit is expected to share space in the armory at 236 W. Jefferson St. with the museum until 1993. The Discovery Center anticipates having the western end of the building filled with exhibits and the public by fall.

"Within a week and a half we expect to have crews going in to remove the asbestos in the building and that will be the first step in the renovations," said Stephen Karon, the Discovery Center's executive director.

To pay for the new exhibits and construction, the Discovery Center is beginning an \$8.1 million fund drive.

■ DISCOVERY, Page B3

## Steve Karon's dream is launched

I want to see Steve Karon's Probability Machine.

It's 14 feet tall and has 10,000 rubber balls which tumble into a chamber every 10 minutes. As the balls drop, they form a bell curve at the base.

Sometimes the balls take a different shape," he explained. "This shows the laws of probability."

Steve's the executive director of the Discovery Center of Syracuse. Today he started unloading his truck, which will amaze and educate us. He moved across the street in the southwest quarter of downtown and began

the work he came to Syracuse to do 12 years ago. "I wouldn't have come here for anything else but to be in on the beginnings of a major new project."

Steve's major new project — and ours — is a permanent home for the Discovery Center. We shuffled papers today to make it so.

Metropolitan Development Foundation took title to the Jefferson Street Armory from the state. The landmark will belong to the foundation, part of the Metropolitan Development Association. The Museum of Science and Technology — aka Discovery Center — is the primary tenant.

The old arsenal will be home to full-time science teachers instead of weekend warriors of the National Guard.

I sat with one of the most excited guys in town for a while at the eve of the title-trans-

fer. Steve had trouble dealing with gravity in his office on South Clinton Street, he bounced on and off the seat cushion, all the time feeling out words such as unbelievable, thrilling and unique.

Yes, Steve was waiting for this since he moved from the Maryland Science Center in Baltimore in 1980. He opened the Discovery Center in an Armory Square store front the next year with the promise the quarters were temporary; one day we'd have the free-standing, hands-on museum of science we've been hearing about since a designer proposed one next to the art museum in the first layouts of the Community Plaza in the 1960s.

Thursday he spread out real designs next to his PC and showed me what the Center

■ STEVE KARON, Page B3

## Infant still in need of new liver

► Tests rule out her parents as donors.

By Amber Smith  
Staff Writer

A Liverpool infant who needs a new liver won't be able to get a transplant from her mother or father.

Art Ruston, a social studies teacher at Chestnut Hill Middle School, said he and his wife, Ann, went through a series of tests at the University of Chicago Medical Center last weekend.

The tests showed their blood would not mix with the blood of their 8-month-old daughter, Erin. A transplant using either of their livers would be rejected by the infant.

Ann Ruston had hoped to donate a piece of her liver, which would then regenerate in Erin like the arms of a starfish.

Now the baby's name has been



TESTS SHOW Ann Ruston can't donate her liver to her 8-month-old daughter, Erin. Now the Rustons, of Liverpool, will wait for friends or an anonymous donor to help keep their baby alive.

added to a national waiting list of about 1,800 people waiting for a liver transplant from anonymous cadavers.

The Rustons haven't given up. They're exploring whether other family members or friends would be able to donate portions of their livers. Doctors say Erin would fare better with a living donor transplant because she could have it before her health deteriorates.

## Despite gripes, village taxes rise 60%

By Brian Carr  
Staff Writer

It's official: North Syracuse landowners will pay 60 percent more in property taxes in the budget year starting June 1.

Village trustees voted 5 to 0 Thursday to approve a \$3,382,474 budget. That means taxes will increase about \$287 on a village home assessed at \$5,000.

"I want to live in the village of North Syracuse, but I want to do other things in my life than just paying taxes, taxes, taxes," said William Kaleskie of 228 Melrose Ave. at a meeting at the community center on Thursday.

He's a truck driver on a fixed income due to a medical disability. His village property taxes are increasing about \$258 in June.

"You should have a referendum to see if we want a village or don't want a village," he told the trustees. "You people have gotten out of hand."

The trustees did not take him up on the offer.

Village governments can be eliminated by a majority vote at a public referendum. Not everyone thinks that's a good idea for North Syracuse.

"It's kind of a knee-jerk reaction," said William O'Donnell of 126 Oakley Drive. "Quite often the

grass on the other side of the fence is not as green as it looks."

Margo Fischer of 355 Belmore Drive agrees. She said she'd never vote to get rid of North Syracuse.

"I like the village the way it is," she said, adding that her home has been broken into five times since she moved there in 1952 and the North Syracuse Police caught the culprit each time.

"Whenever I call the police they come. They come."

The large tax increase is necessary to pay off \$330,000 borrowed last year to balance the books. Trustees said that taxes will likely decrease next year after the loan is repaid.

Bruce Beckman of 212 Roxann Ave. isn't convinced.

"I've been a taxpayer here for 17 years and I've never seen my taxes go down," he told a crowd of 77 residents and village employees crammed the meeting room.

The budget will increase 12.3 percent from this year. Trustees originally wanted a 65 percent tax increase, but they saved \$20,000 by

eliminating a heavy trash pickup day in the village. Also, a trash-hauling bid approved Thursday was \$20,000 less than trustees expected.

"Many in the audience wanted the village to stay intact but asked trustees to look for more cuts before approving the budget."

It didn't work. The trustees approved the tax increase anyway, in part because state law requires village budgets to be approved by May 1.

"It's a dumb political decision to raise taxes 60 percent," said Mayor James Hotchkiss. "But it's the right thing to do."

North Syracuse already is one of the most heavily taxed areas in the state.

Onondaga County last year had the eighth-highest property taxes in the state outside New York City. Total school, town and county taxes in North Syracuse ranked sixth in the county this year and third in the county last year, according to an annual Herald-Journal analysis of local taxes.

North Syracuse straddles the Cicero and Clay town border.

The tax rate is increasing from \$86.40 to \$133.77 per \$1,000 of assessed value on village homes in Clay. The rate increases from \$84.28 to \$131.50 per \$1,000 of assessed value in Cicero.

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# Suburban

## Sheriff won't charge for chopper service

► Helicopter makes free flights for rescues and searches outside of Onondaga County.

By Patrick Lakamp  
Staff Writer

The sheriff's department's helicopter service won't charge distant communities or injured people needing flights of mercy.

Onondaga County taxpayers will continue to subsidize flights by the chopper which transports injured people to Syracuse hospitals and hunts down escaped prisoners and missing persons throughout Central New York.

Some lawmakers, citing the county's

tight finances, have pushed to charge for the helicopter's use outside Onondaga County.

"On the surface, it sounds like a good idea," said Legislator Kevin Walsh, R-Clay. "But as we began to look at it, we discovered it would end up costing us more money."

Charging for the helicopter's use would have changed its status from a public use to commercial, driving up liability insurance rates, Walsh said.

The extra cost is between \$29,000 and \$91,000, while reimbursements from out-of-county flights would have totaled about \$13,000 in 1991, according to figures supplied by the sheriff's department.

"It looks like whatever we would recoup wouldn't match the extra we'd have to spend," Walsh said.

The sheriff's helicopter unit cost Onondaga County about \$625,000 in 1991, the

department has said.

Just how much it costs to keep the helicopter in the air varies according to which formula county officials use.

If sheriff's deputies keep to an average of 1,200 hours a year in the air, taxpayers pay \$480 an hour for its service. That includes salaries and benefits for the pilots and mechanics, fuel, chopper parts and the heliport building on Cessna Road in Camillus.

In 1991, the helicopter flew 751 hours, so taxpayers paid \$663 an hour to fly and maintain the helicopter.

If Onondaga County sought to charge for the out-of-county flights, it wouldn't charge the higher rate. Only direct and fixed costs would be included.

These costs include the fuel and lubricants, maintenance, insurance and the salaries of one pilot and an observer. These costs total \$245 an hour.

In 1991, the helicopter spent 52 hours on flights outside Onondaga County on police, rescue and search calls. That amounts to about 7 percent of the 751 total hours spent on calls.

"It would be difficult for us to pay the costs of that helicopter," said Herbert Marshall Jr., R-Port Byron, chairman of the Cayuga County Legislature.

Onondaga County's helicopter has saved car crash victims in Cayuga County, particularly those with head injuries, Marshall said.

"That service is really important to us and we appreciate the service," Marshall said. "We don't have the financial base to get into that business. What I want to do is make sure our people don't misuse or overuse Onondaga County's helicopter."

Marshall said he hopes officials from both counties can meet and come to an arrangement.

### BRIEFS

#### Judge doesn't buy story, gives courier 25 to life

Narciso Campos Almonte stood in court Thursday and asked for leniency so he could be around to watch his 5-year-old son grow up.

County Court Judge J. Kevin Mulroy responded with a pointed question of his own.

"Would he like his 5-year-old child to grow up using drugs?" the judge asked as an interpreter translated the question into Spanish for Almonte. The

29-year-old defendant replied he had not been aware he had cocaine in his possession and that he was not a drug dealer.

Mulroy was not impressed, sentencing Almonte to serve the maximum penalty of 25 years to life in state prison for having more than two pounds of cocaine in the car he was driving when the vehicle slammed into the rear of a tractor trailer truck on Interstate 81 three years ago.

Almonte had been a fugitive for more than two years after jumping bail and disappearing before a January 1980 trial was held without him. The \$10,000 bail was forfeited and a jury convicted the missing Almonte of first-degree criminal possession of a controlled substance.

Almonte was recaptured last month in New York City and was back before Mulroy Thursday to learn his fate.

As defense lawyer Salvatore Piemonte pleaded Almonte's case by arguing that the defendant was unaware of the cocaine in the car until the impact of the accident jarred it loose, Mulroy turned to a group of visiting students sitting in the jury box in his courtroom and asked them if they were buying the story.

Taking a page from an old Cheech and Chong comedy routine, the judge joked it sounded like Almonte was suggesting he had just found the drugs and was heading to the police station to turn them in when he got caught. Mulroy obviously wasn't buying the defense line that Almonte had been hired to drive a car from New York City to Rochester with no knowledge of the packages of cocaine under the front seat.

Senior Assistant District Attorney Richard Southwick also dismissed the defense claims. In asking Mulroy to sentence Almonte to the maximum penalty, he reminded the judge how the truck driver whose rig was struck from behind had found Almonte hurling the subball-sized packages of cocaine into the median of the interstate before police arrived on the scene.

Southwick said state police recovered 2.23 pounds of cocaine along the highway after the May 1989 collision.

— Jim O'Hara

#### SU chooses new dean at school of engineering

Syracuse University's engineering school, one of the programs hardest hit by recent cutbacks, has a new dean.

Professor Steven Chamberlain, chairman of SU's biological engineering department, will be the 11th dean of the L.C. Smith College of Engineering, the university announced Thursday.

Chamberlain, 105 Academy St., Manlius, will replace Bradley Strait on July 1.

Strait was served as dean since 1989. He will retain his position as a professor of electrical and computer engineering.

Over the next five years, the college's annual budget will drop about \$2.85 million according to plans unveiled in February by SU Chancellor Kenneth Shaw.

— Frank Herro

#### 1,700 runners expected in downtown Syracuse

Seventeen hundred people are expected to run through Syracuse streets Saturday during the 14th annual Mountain Goat Run and three other races.

Organizers are asking people who live along the race course not to park their cars in the street and to make sure their dogs are on leashes. They're also suggesting they sit outside to cheer the runners on.

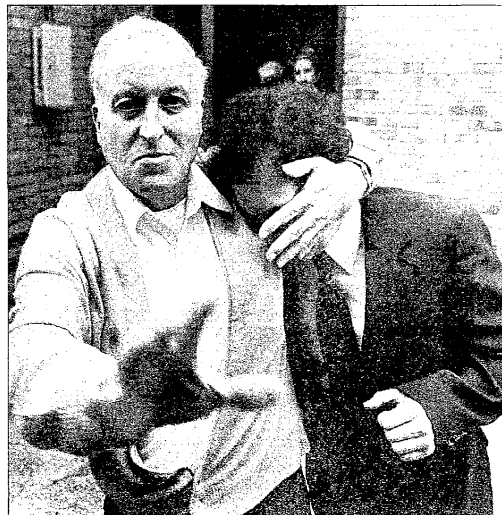
"That's part of the glitter of the race," said Rick Reiner, director of the downtown YMCA, a sponsor of the event. The hilly, 10-mile Mountain Goat race begins at 9:15 a.m. at Columbus Circle in downtown. Organizers expect even the slowest runners to be finished before noon.

The course proceeds up Jefferson, Clinton, West Onondaga and Dudley streets, onto Hubbell and Stop avenues, then around the Woodland Reservoir.

From there, runners will go down Hancock, Arden and Charmouth drives, onto Hillview and Embury avenues, and along Hach Street to West Brighton Avenue. Runners will cross South Salina Street and head up Thurston Street to Comstock Avenue.

Then they will cut across Ostrom Avenue to circle the water tower at Thomson Park. They will go down to Thomson Street to Crouse Avenue, and then take East Genesee Street back to the finish line at Columbus Circle.

A 3,000-meter wheelchair race will start at 8:20 a.m., followed by a 3,000-meter run at 8:30 a.m. and a 100-meter run for children six and under that starts at 8:30 a.m.



AN UNNAMED UNCLE shields the face of Joseph Contrera from a photographer outside the Cayuga County Courthouse Thursday.

Contrera, of Auburn, is accused of more than 20 counts of sex crimes against teen-age boys. He was in court seeking a bail reduction.

## Morgue worker faces sex charges

■ MORGUE  
Continued from Page B1

brother, James Smith, and another man, Walter Ellis. If they wanted to come see human remains Contrera had brought home from the Onondaga County morgue.

Smith and Ellis live on Lockwood Road, but neither was home Thursday. Smith's wife declined to give her name but confirmed that Contrera had asked her husband to come see the human bones.

"My husband thought it was weird," the woman said. "He didn't go over there."

In the last two weeks, Contrera has been charged with two counts of use of a child in a sexual performance, three counts of third-degree sodomy, one count of first-degree sexual abuse, six counts of second-degree sexual abuse and 12 counts of endangering the welfare of a child. The charges stem from Contrera's dealings with three youths over age 14.

Contrera's lawyers complained about news reports involving the remains.

## Teen charged with shooting at boys

By Dan Kane  
Staff Writer

Terrill Tyler, 18, of Syracuse got into a fistfight with a 15-year-old boy about a month ago. The boy says Tyler lost. Tyler admits to police there's been bad blood between the two ever since.

Syracuse police say Tyler tried to square things with the boy, Andre Robinson, by firing several shots at him and his friends as they

stood at West Ostrander and Midland avenues on Wednesday night. No one was hurt.

Tyler of 361 Roberts Drive was charged with two felonies Thursday — first-degree reckless endangerment and second-degree criminal possession of a weapon.

In a statement to police, Tyler said that as Robinson ran from the street corner, Tyler followed and fired several shots.

"I told Andre to stop but he did not, so I fired the gun over Andre's

head to scare him," Tyler said. "At no time did I try to shoot anybody."

Tyler told police that he got the loaded gun a week ago from a man he met in Springfield Gardens apartments in DeWitt. He said he couldn't identify the man.

"I never paid for the gun," he said. "The dude just gave it to me."

Tyler said he hid the loaded gun in some silver piping behind a nearby gas station. Police later found a .22-caliber handgun there.

## Discovery Center to move to Armory

■ DISCOVERY  
Continued from Page B1

Karon said the building at 321 S. Clinton St. that has housed the Discovery Center since 1981 is too small.

The renovations are to be completed in three phases concluding in 1995 with the installation of a domed OmniTheater, the first in New York state and one of only 10 in the nation. It will surround up to 250 people at a time with huge images and dramatic sound.

"There will be a major enhancement in the quality of what we do," said Karon. "Up to now we've concentrated on the (scientific) concepts. Now we'll have more and it won't be with typewritten explanations and bases made from whatever works."

The museum is expected to draw 300,000 visitors annually with exhibit areas orbiting a central mezzanine crowned with a man-made space satellite.

An old rocket will be posted outside the building. Karon said the museum is still looking for a Delta rocket, the type used to launch satellites, because it has more of a spaceship appearance. "There is another type of rocket we can get right now, but it looks like a piece of drainpipe," said Karon.

Indoor exhibits will concentrate on the development of life on earth, geology and how science shapes society. Individual exhibits will deal with volcanoes, nutrition and the development of counting, among the 200 new displays.

"Right now people know where we are but we're just one more storefront," said the director. "With the armory, we'll have a distinct presence. It's a dramatic building that looks like a museum."

Land outside the building will be used as a public park, which was its original purpose before the city gave the site to the military, said Karon.

## Steve Karon's plan for center takes off

■ STEVE KARON  
Continued from Page B1

will make of the space occupied by the military since the 1950s. The present armory, actually it's a series of three structures, dates to 1976.

Phase One, Steve explained, will get us inside a new science museum this fall. That's when the western third of the armory is converted to a hall filled with 30 new displays designed by Steve and about 20 old favorites from South Clinton.

The major expansion takes place in Phase Two, when a new exhibit hall in the center of the building will carry out the themes of our place in the universe, the earth and the local environment. This part should be ready in the fall of 1993.

The third phase, and to Steve the part of his building he really gets wound up about, is installation of the wrap-around OmniTheater with "humungous sound system" and visual images that surround you in your seat.

"Everywhere you look is an image," Steve said, leaning in on his visitor. "It's like you're outdoors. It's an unbelievable experience."

There's no opening date for the theater. Construction can't begin until the Guard moves into its new, promised but unstarted armory on Molloy Road.

Steve and his helpers have been storing hardware and ideas anticipating today for several years. The Probability Machine is in storage. Likewise, the old apothecary museum run by the Rothchilds at their store on East Genesee Street.

And the cutaway truck engine, the weather station and the area on bubbles. Steve started to lift from his chair again.

"Yes, you'll actually be able to wrap yourself up in a huge soap bubble..."

### CLASS ACTION

## Westhill High musicians take honors in Williamsburg

Westhill High School's chorus and concert band were award winners recently at Fiesta-Va Invitational Music Festival in Williamsburg, Va.

The band received a superior rating in competition with five other bands in all divisions.

Westhill's was awarded a trophy as the best concert band at the festival, held March 27.

The school's mixed chorus and chamber chorus received ratings of excellent, and the boys double ocel received a superior rating. The mixed chorus also won an award as the best of two choruses in the festival.

Shelli Serimale, a junior who plays piano, received a trophy as outstanding accompanist.

"Competing against yourself is the key," said Thomas Lindemann, the high school's fine arts department leader and tour leader. "If someone says you're better than someone else, that's great, but knowing that you did your best and learning from that experience is the most important thing."

Traveling to another state for a competition was thoroughly enjoyable, according to senior Steve Zumchak, 17, who sings and plays trumpet.

Of 25 awards handed out, Westhill received 13, Zumchak said.

Senior bassoonist Mary Jo Keyes, 18, called the competition good. "We practiced our competition music for months,

but in Williamsburg we didn't have any major screw-ups at all," she said.

While in Williamsburg, the teens visited the Jamestown Settlement and Busch Gardens amusement park.

"Busch Gardens has a lot of cool rides," Keyes said. She said her favorite ride was a roller coaster that was suspended from a rail. "It was a little sick when I got off, but it was a good ride," she said.

During their second night at the George Washington Hotel in Williamsburg, the teens and their chaperons had to evacuate their rooms when an electrical problem triggered the fire alarm system at 2:30 a.m., Keyes said. They were outside for about a half-hour.

"Many of us were wearing shorts and T-shirts, and several were barefoot in

the 30-degree weather," Zumchak said. The trip was paid for by fund-raisers and parents of the teens.

William Black is director of Westhill High's vocal ensembles. Lindemann also is band conductor.

### Talent show Saturday

West Genesee High School's Talent Showcase will start at 7 p.m. Saturday in the school auditorium.

Admission is \$2, and tickets will be sold at the door. Sponsors are the Class of '92 and the Camillus Optimist Club.

— Lisa May, senior, West Genesee



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Molly Fennell, Bureau Chief  
592-7140

## BRIEFS

**Vintage boat fire was set purposely**

ALEXANDRIA BAY — A fire that caused more than \$5 million damage and destroyed irreplaceable vintage boats was deliberately set, investigators said.

There are no suspects yet in the April 8 blaze that began in a boathouse owned by Hutchinson Boat Works, said Detective Greg Bush of the Jefferson County Sheriff's Department. The fire destroyed two other boathouses and 35 boats.

"We're way in the early stages of the investigation," he said. Investigators will not comment on how or when the fire was set. Bush said the cause of the fire was difficult to determine because many of the boats had full fuel tanks, some with more than 200 gallons of gas.

The sheriff's department will take over the criminal investigation, he said. Members of the sheriff's department and state police as well as Jefferson County fire investigators and the state Office of Fire Prevention and Control worked on determining the cause of the fire.

The fire was reported at 4:25 a.m. on April 8 and firefighters found the buildings fully engulfed in flames. More than 200 firefighters were called to the scene.

The Hutchinson's building dated back to the World War II era, when the boat works built yacht patrol boats for the U.S. Navy. At the time of the fire, the building was being used for the restoration of antique wooden boats.

**Wolcott man arrested after fight over loan**

WOLCOTT — A Wolcott man was charged with assault and menacing Thursday after he struck another man in the face with a pistol, state police said.

The two were arguing over a loan, police said. William Celso, 24, of 40 Auburn St., Wolcott, was charged Thursday with second-degree assault and menacing. Celso was sent to the Wayne County Jail on \$5,000 cash bail.

State police said Celso was trying to collect \$40 from Stephen Brewster when he went over to Brewster's house on Butler Street about 2:30 a.m. Thursday. When Brewster refused to give him any money and told him to leave, Celso pulled out a handgun. That's when the two started fighting, police said.

Brewster suffered a cut on his face, but he did not require medical treatment, police said.

**Potsdam student may have measles**

POTSDAM — A possible case of measles has State University College at Potsdam on alert.

A student, who lives in an off-campus apartment, appears to have the disease, said Helen C. Chapple, director of college relations. Although it takes five days to positively identify the disease, Chapple said the doctors are reasonably sure of their diagnosis.

It could not be determined where the student acquired it. The student was treated and released from Potsdam-Cattaraugus Hospital and will be going home soon, Chapple said.

"Since most Potsdam College students have been immunized against the measles, we do not expect any further cases," said Christine Strong, assistant vice president for residence life.

College officials will be meeting with authorities from the Public Health Department as soon as possible to determine the safest course of action for the college community.

Three years ago, Potsdam College undertook a massive immunization campaign to protect all students after a visitor to the campus developed the symptoms of the disease. At the same time, other precautionary measures, including restricting attendance at commencement ceremonies, were implemented.

Chapple said there are a few students who are allergic to the vaccine, and college officials are trying to locate them and possibly send them home.

**TV show focuses on Rep. Boehlert's views**

It's not exactly "Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous" but television viewers who want a look at what U.S. Rep. Sherwood Boehlert's life is like can tune in tonight and Sunday to find out.

Boehlert, R-New Hartford, Onondaga County, is the subject of WCNY-TV's "CNY Closeups" show at 9:30 p.m. today and 5:30 p.m. Sunday.

The broadcast includes Boehlert's feelings on a number of national subjects including congressional reform, the economy, education and the environment.

## Oswego

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B1

## INSIDE



Pages B6-7

## DIVIDENDS

Niagara Mohawk's board of directors has approved an increase in the utility's quarterly common stock dividend from 16 cents to 20 cents per share.

Business/B6

## TEENS LOOK TO ADULTS

Youngsters say they need more leadership, funding to deal with life's stresses.

B2

## NO CHARGE FOR HOSPITAL SERVICE

Onondaga County will continue to pay for the sheriff's department helicopter to transport injured people.

Metro/B3

## SATURDAY

## SHAPING UP

Bodybuilding takes years of training, determination and discipline. For some teens, it's a way of life. They follow a strict regimen of diet and work to get in shape for competition.

## Construction starts on nursing home addition

By Andrew Smith  
Staff Writer

OSWEGO — Terrence Gorman was a little late with his shovel Thursday afternoon.

Gorman, administrator of St. Luke's Nursing Home, and Oswego dignitaries ripped up a few patches of the front lawn in a groundbreaking ceremony for an 80-bed expansion.

Not only were they late, they were also in the wrong place. Behind the building, where the \$5.9 million addition will be, contractors already have a considerable hole in the ground and the beginnings of a foundation.

Thursday's ceremony was symbolic. Gorman patted the lawn back into place, and explained the philosophy of the expansion.

The current home is a seven-story building overlooking the Oswego River on the city's east side. The new part of the nursing home will stretch behind the high-rise and will include a courtyard.

"We believe a one-story design will better be able to serve our population," Gorman said. "They'll be able to enjoy the weather (in the courtyard)."

For some residents, that may be the only place they can go to. Patients with Alzheimer's Disease, for example, may wander off without supervision and end up across

state Route 481 in the river, Gorman said. In an enclosed courtyard, that wouldn't be a problem.

Residents can walk around a one-story building more easily than they can in a high-rise, he said.

In addition to offering more room, St. Luke's will offer more services when the new wing opens next March. For the first time, it will offer skilled nursing home care. That means people whose conditions worsen won't have to leave St. Luke's to get the care they need, Gorman said.

"Residents will be able to consider St. Luke's their home," he said.

This is something St. Luke's intended do

from the start, said the Rev. William J. Brown, president of the home's board of directors.

"We always wanted to have skilled nursing," he said.

The home also will offer adult day care. Just as with child day care, families can drop off adults who need supervision or medical attention and pick them up when they are done with work.

City and county officials praised St. Luke's and wished it luck in its expansion.

"I think it's going to be something that the county and the city and everybody are going to need," said Hollis Iselin, county legislative chairman.

## APW board says budget would not raise taxes

► Citizens group proposes alternative almost \$900,000 lower than school panel's \$12.8 million.

By Wagner Dotto  
Staff Writer

PARISH — The board of the Altmar-Parish-Williamstown Central School District adopted a budget for the 1992-93 year during a meeting Thursday night.

The \$12,806,493 million budget was approved 7 to 0 at 11:15 p.m. It will now be voted on by residents on May 20.

The budget represents about \$300,000 less than the first version of the budget presented to the board about a month ago, but it is about \$900,000 higher than the 1991-92 budget.

During the meeting, attended by more than 100 people who went to protest against the suspension of a math teacher, members of a taxpayer group presented what they called an "alternative budget."

It calls for spending to total \$11,899,000. The group asked the board to put that budget on the ballot.

Superintendent Michael Smith said the spending plan approved Thursday would mean no or little tax increase for local residents.

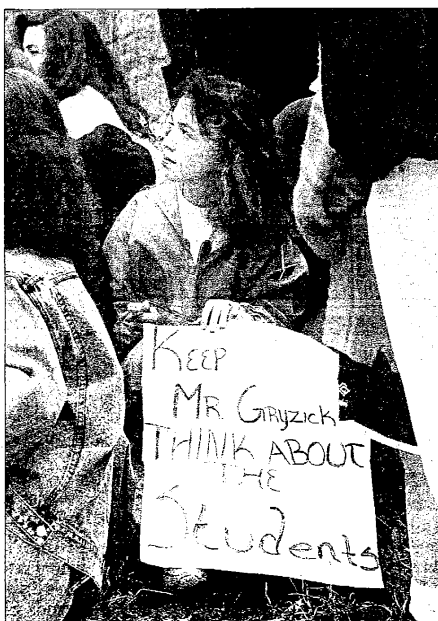
"Most people should see no increase in school taxes for next year," Smith said.

The superintendent said, however, that some residents will pay higher taxes as a result of other components of the index that determines the tax value, such as changes in property assessments.

The budget eliminates two teaching positions, but adds resources to purchase equipment and to project the hiring of two part-time teachers.

Smith said the school has spent money on books and equipment for four years.

The increase of \$900,000 over this year's budget has been attributed to the teachers



NIKKI IGGAR, an A-P-W student, holds a sign during a Thursday morning demonstration at the school protesting the suspension of math teacher Robert Grzyck. Students also attended an evening school board meeting, where a tentative budget was passed. See related story: A1

salary increase and the expenditure on library equipment.

Proponents of the alternative budget said it would save the district about \$1 million. More than 10 people worked on that budget, they said.

The district, they said, has overbudgeted on some items such as fuel and supplies.

Liz Rutledge, one of the leaders of the group, said the cuts presented by the district were not legitimate, because it cut money that would not be spent.

Last year, residents defeated the proposed budget. An austerity plan was adopted instead.

## Man charged with sex crimes raps press coverage

By Shawn Carey  
Staff Writer

AUBURN — An Auburn man accused of more than 20 counts of sex crimes involving teen-age boys has been the victim of "sensationalized" media coverage, his lawyers contend Thursday.

Joseph J. Contrera, 37, of 424 Lockwood Road, asked Cayuga County Court Judge Peter E. Corning to cut his bail from \$50,000 to \$5,000 Thursday. Corning reserved his decision.

Specifically, the lawyers noted how news reports have surfaced about Contrera keeping skeletal human remains in the woods behind his house.

Contrera worked as a morgue technician for the Onondaga County Medical Examiner's Office, but has been suspended from his job.

A variety of human and animal bones were placed in his yard

when the medical examiner's office held a 1988 seminar on the discovery of human remains, one of Contrera's lawyers, Dennis Sedor, said in court Thursday.

The four-day seminar was attended by law enforcement agencies staff, and field classes were held at Contrera's residence, as well as at the residence of Onondaga County Medical Examiner Erik Mitchell, Sedor said.

The human remains, which were from corpses donated to the coroner's office, were left on Contrera's property for several months but eventually removed, Sedor said.

Sedor said the press is "attempting to portray Contrera as another 'Hannibal the Cannibal' (a mass murderer in the movie, 'Silence of the Lambs') or Jeffrey Dahmer, and I think it's vicious."

State Police Investigator David Gould said he is investigating reports from youths who said that

Contrera kept human bones in his back yard as recently as several months ago, long after the seminar in July 1988.

Neighbors on Lockwood Road had similar reports about Contrera. Laura Gillis of 427 Lockwood Road said Contrera had asked her brother, James Smith, and another man, Walter Ellis, if they wanted to come over and see some human remains. Contrera had brought home from the Onondaga County morgue.

Both Smith and Ellis live on Lockwood Road, but neither was home Thursday. Smith's wife declined to give her name, but confirmed that Contrera had asked her husband to come over and see the human bones.

"My husband thought it was weird," the woman said. "He didn't go over there."

In the last two weeks, Contrera has been charged with two counts

of use of a child in a sexual performance, three counts of third-degree sodomy, one count of first-degree sexual abuse, six counts of second-degree sexual abuse and 12 counts of endangering the welfare of a child.

All of the charges stem from Contrera's dealings with three youths over the age of 14.

Evidence includes statements from the victims, a signed confession from Contrera, an audiotape and a videotape of Contrera performing sexual acts with one of the victims.

Attorney Paul Carbonaro said his client "has been singled out for unequal treatment" and "papered to death" by the state police and district attorney's office.

Carbonaro said the number of charges brought against Contrera makes it look as if there are "many alleged victims, when in fact there are very few." Carbonaro said.

## Census provides snapshot of county

By Mary Jo Hill  
Staff Writer

Everything from plumbing to poverty to population is covered in a recent report on the 1990 count by the U.S. Census Bureau for towns in Oswego County.

Schroepfel had 8,931 people, making it the most populated of the county's towns, according to the census figures.

Orwell had the highest proportion of people born outside New York living within its borders. About 19 percent of Orwell's residents listed their birthplace as another state.

NONE OF the county's towns has much racial diversity, and the populations of both Parish and Redfield were all white, according to the census.

The most diversity was in Orwell and Oswego Town. About 5 percent of Orwell's population was a race other than white, and about 4 percent of Oswego Town's people listed a race other than white.

In 1989, Minetto households had the highest median income: \$46,641. Households in Orwell had the lowest median income: \$22,400.

The most households listing an income of \$100,000 or more in 1989 were in Granby, which claims 76 households in that income range. But Minetto had the highest proportion of households — 6 percent — making \$100,000 or more.

Amboy and Orwell each had about 20 percent of their populations living below the poverty line during 1989, according to the census figures. Schroepfel had 731 people in the category — the highest actual number of the towns.

IT TOOK anywhere from 16 minutes to 34 minutes, on average, for town residents to get to work in 1989. Oswego Town residents had the lowest average travel time, 16 minutes, while Amboy residents had the highest average commute time at 34 minutes.

Hammill had the lowest median rent — \$394 — and Palermo residents had the highest at \$540.

Redfield residents listed \$454 as their median mortgage, the fourth of the towns. And West Monroe homeowners had the highest median mortgage at \$719.

IN ONONDAGA County, the wealthiest residents moved even further away from Syracuse during the 1980s, leaving the city with an increasingly poor population.

The town of Manlius in the eastern suburbs had the highest median income — \$45,682 — out of the 20 cities and towns in Onondaga County, according to the 1990 U.S. Census. The city of Syracuse ranked last with a median income of \$21,242.

By 1980, the wealthiest towns in Onondaga County were Manlius, Pompey and Lyander, all of which are on the outer rim of the county. During the 1980s, they sprouted luxury homes on what had recently been secluded farmland.